February 28, 2015

Dear Educator, Mentor, Sponsor, Role Model:

As we prepare to celebrate the 50th Anniversary of the Voting Rights Act, we want to pause and make sure the next generation of voters understands the importance of their right to vote in these great United States of America.

Our country is one of the greatest in the world. Our freedom of speech along with our right to choose who leads our country and how we want to be led is something we want all our leaders present and future to never forget.

There is a lot of history, struggle and victory in the history leading up to and during the signing of the Voting Rights Act of 1965. It took unity of ALL people, races, and cultures to achieve this great event. We want to celebrate that period. We must remember where we came from as we are standing on the shoulders of many great leaders who knew the value of the vote and its importance to our country.

To ensure our next generation of voters get this message, The Alliance and other community groups are presenting the ARTS AND ESSAY CELEBRATION OF THE 50TH ANNIVERSAY OF THE VOTING RIGHTS ACT.

The emphasis of this celebration will be on the 6th 7th and 8th grade levels. These students will be voting in the next few years. The goal is to educate and empower these students to ensure they know why they are voting, how they got this right and the importance of THEIR vote in the coming years.

Thru the power of their written word in essay or poetry, in the arts, thru dance, music, acting, song, or artist renderings; the students will have the opportunity to tell the story of the Voting Rights Act. They will be able to develop their skills in the spoken and written word, learn about world views, ethics and values. This is not a competition. The students have the opportunity to express their knowledge, their talents, and their opinions about an event that changed our country.

There will be a two tiered opportunity to present their works and students will receive medallions, prizes and certificates for participating. Their works will hang in the gallery of the Beck Center and will be presented in book or DVD form to be placed in the Becks library collection.

Applications and works will be collected until April 10th. The arts will be presented April 18th at the Beck Exhibition Center from 10 till 2 pm and the main celebration will be held May 2nd at the Family Justice Center from 10 till 2 pm. The students will also have a chance to meet local civil rights leaders and learn HOW to vote so they will be aware when the time comes.

Please see the attached application. Each piece of work must have this cover sheet attached. There is no cost to the student.

For more information please contact me. I look forward to seeing the great things our children have to say about this historic period of time and how it has affected their perceptions of their voting right.

Respectfully,

Vivian Underwood-Shipe

President Local 406 - National Alliance of Postal and Federal Employees

Box 1502 Knox Tn 37901-1502 865-617-8353
ARTS AND ESSAY CELEBRATION
50TH ANNIVERSAY
VOTING RIGHTS ACT

To raise awareness of the history behind the VOTING RIGHTS ACT, to ensure the students understand the importance of the right to vote in the United States of America, and to give the student the opportunity to express their views and knowledge gleaned.

OPEN TO STUDENTS IN THE 6TH 7TH AND 8TH GRADES.

Students may present in the following ways.

Arts: a five minute presentation by song, dance, musical instrument, or skit.

Oratorical: a two page essay or original poem

DATES: Students will present April 18th, from 10 till 2 pm at the Beck Cultural Center.

Main celebration May 2nd from 10 till 2pm at the Family Justice Center.

Students will receive medallions, prizes and certificates for participation.

Applications will be accepted March 1st – April 10th

STUDENT NAME_________________________________________________________________

SCHOOL OR ORGANIZATION_____________________ GRADE______________

TEACHER OR SPONSOR______________________________

PARENTS NAME AND ADDRESS__________________________________________

PHONE OR EMAIL_____________________________________________________

Student is presenting in the following form: (If essay or poem - attach to this cover sheet)

CHECK ONE: essay___ poem____ song___ skit____ dance___

Musical instrument ______(indicate type)  other_____

NOTE: students must bring their own instruments to the arts performances – if piano rendition- please bring your own key board (Performing Arts students WILL BE CONTACTED AS TO TIME SLOT FOR PERFORMANCE!)

This application must be returned and POSTMARKED BY APRIL 10TH. RETURN TO:

ARTS/ESSAY CELEBRATION

BOX 1502  KNOX TN 37901

****please see attached sheet for suggested topics - these are not inclusive as the student may research their own ideas)
VOTING RIGHTS ACT
RESEARCH SUGGESTIONS

Literacy tests given to be able to vote
Poll taxes
Jim Crow Laws
League of Women Voters and other organizations involvement is voting rights movement
March on Selma
Lynchings
Martin Luther King
President Lyndon Johnson involvement, speeches, and signing of the act
Music of that time period
Voter discrimination examples
Artwork depicting that time period. (Recreations or the students own.)
Activist, entertainers, legislative involvement in the Voting Rights Struggle
Different races and religions involved in the Voting Rights Struggle
Current voter rights act changes
Current voter identification laws

During or after presentation or in the essay or poetry presented – the student MUST express what they have learned, how it affected them and how it will affect their actions when they become eligible to vote.